CONSTRUCTION SAFETY PARTNERSHIP
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Guidance for Developing a Risk Assessment Method Statement (RAMS)

HSA
An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta
Health and Safety Authority

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Introduction

While method statements are not mentioned in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 or other legislation, employers are required under Section 8 to provide "systems of work that are planned, organised, performed, maintained and revised as appropriate so as to be, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risk to health".

Additionally, Section 19 dictates that every employer shall identify the hazards in the place of work under his or her control, and that they assess the risks presented by those hazards.

A Method Statement including Risk Assessment(s) can form part of a contractors / self-employed persons' safety management system (i.e. safety statement including signed policy and risk assessment).

The Risk Assessment Method Statement (RAMS) must be:

- developed by employers before carrying out any medium to high risk work activities to ensure that the work activities are planned, organised, performed, maintained and revised as appropriate so as to be, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risk to health,
- planned in consultation with stakeholders (e.g. employer (contractor), Project Supervisor Construction Stage (PSCS) and workers assigned for the task), and
- agreed and formally signed-off by all relevant persons in advance of work starting.

Development of a RAMS will provide evidence that:

- all relevant hazards have been identified for the work activity,
- the work activity has been suitably planned and that adequate resources are provided to complete the work safely,
- the key stakeholders that will take responsibility for the work are identified (e.g. responsible person(s) for the contractor and the PSCS),
- works have been co-ordinated with all stakeholders (e.g. PSCS, site personnel and other contractors), and
- workers are trained, briefed and that their feedback has been included in the RAMS.

Terminology

PSCS	Project Supervisor Construction Stage
PSDP	Project Supervisor Design Stage
RAMS	Risk Assessment Method Statement
CSCS	Construction Skills Certification Scheme
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
MEWP	Mobile Elevating Work Platform
PTW	Permit to Work
SSWP	Safe System of Work Plan
SPA	Safe Plan of Action
SWP	Safe Work Plan

How to Use the Risk Assessment Method Statement (RAMS)

The employer will select a responsible person(s) who will take ownership for developing the RAMS, overseeing the work and for ensuring that it is reviewed and updated as necessary in consultation with all stakeholders (e.g. Project Supervisor Construction Stage (PSCS) other contractors and site personnel).

This RAMS template is broken into 3 steps and 8 sections:

Development of the RAMS 3 Step Process

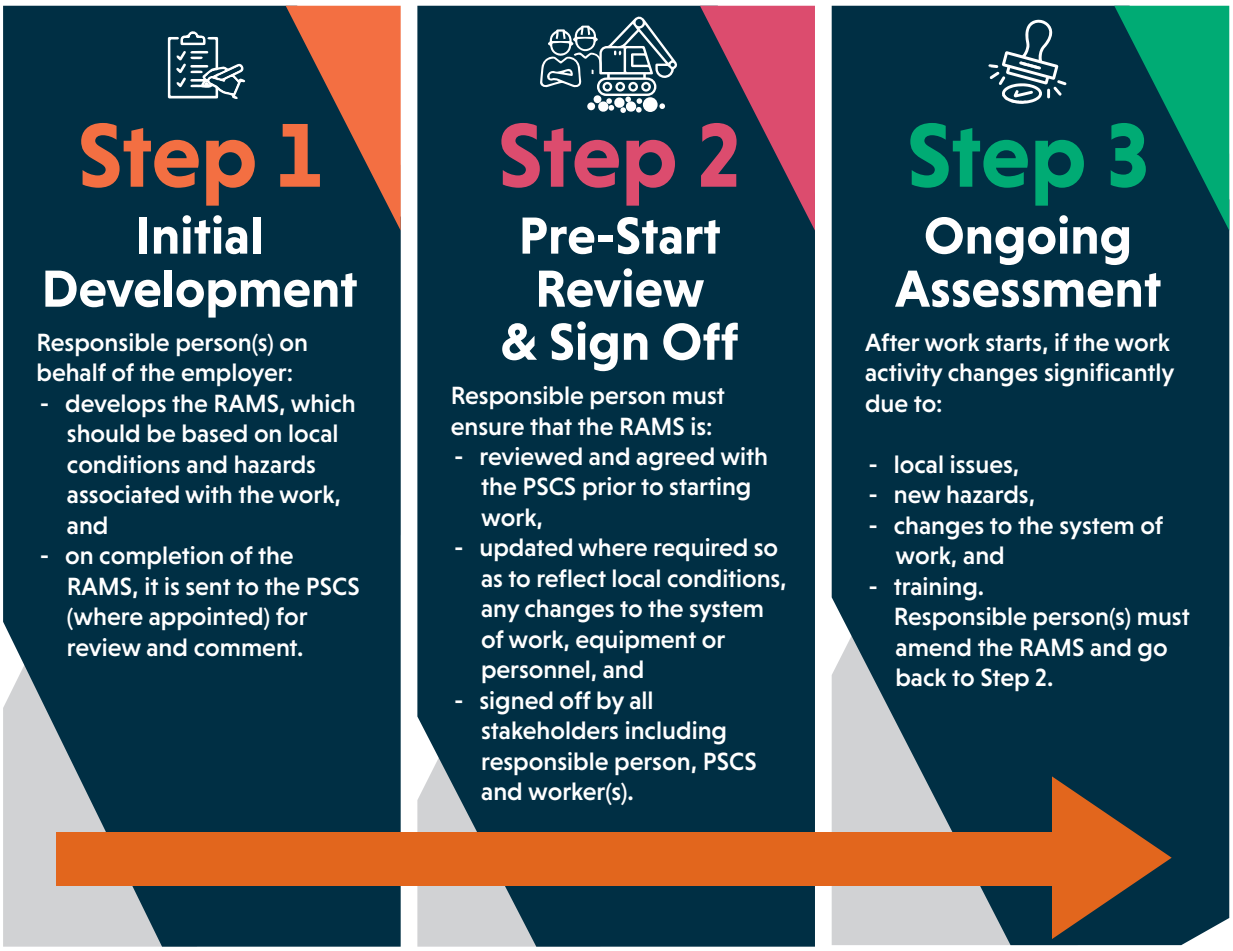
Step 1
Initial Development
Responsible person(s) on behalf of the employer:
- develops the RAMS, which should be based on local conditions and hazards associated with the work, and
- on completion of the RAMS, it is sent to the PSCS (where appointed) for review and comment.
Step 2
Pre-Start Review & Sign Off
Responsible person must ensure that the RAMS is:
- reviewed and agreed with the PSCS prior to starting work,
- updated where required so as to reflect local conditions, any changes to the system of work, equipment or personnel, and
- signed off by all stakeholders including responsible person, PSCS and worker(s).
Step 3
Ongoing Assessment
After work starts, if the work activity changes significantly due to:
- local issues,
- new hazards,
- changes to the system of work, and
- training.
Responsible person(s) must amend the RAMS and go back to Step 2.

Figure 1 - 3 Step process for ensuring the RAMS contains up to date information

STEP 1

Initial Development

Certain information might not be known or available at this stage (e.g. specific equipment information, names of personnel, permits to work etc.). However, the vast majority of information including the system of work and resources required should be identified and included in the RAMS at this stage.

STEP 2

Pre-Start Review and Sign Off

Before starting work, the responsible person(s) must:

- review the document considering local conditions, system of work, equipment on site, personnel, training requirements etc., and
- if there are no significant changes* required and all the relevant information is included, then the responsible person(s) may brief and consult with the workers and ensure that the RAMS is signed-off by all relevant stakeholders (e.g. responsible person(s) for managing the work and the PSCS representative. This can be done in Section 7).

STEP 3

Ongoing Assessment

When the work starts, it is important to ensure that:

- the work is adequately monitored and supervised and that the system of work outlined in the RAMS is followed. The use of a written dynamic risk assessments or company-specific tools may be used to support the RAMS. Commonly referenced as Safe System of Work Plan - SSWP or Safe Plan of Action – SPA or Safe Work Plan – SWP,
- in the event that a significant change*occurs at any stage during the task, then the RAMS should be reviewed, amended and agreed with all stakeholders identified during Step 2, and
- the responsible person must ensure that the information contained in the RAMS is kept up to date and reviewed during the period of work and they must keep the PSCS updated on any significant issues arising that could affect the work. Notification of such significant changes must be communicated prior to attempting to recommence works.

Significant Changes*

If significant changes are identified before or after starting work, then work should be stopped until the RAMS has been updated by the responsible person(s). Significant changes could entail:

- new hazards being identified (e.g. changes to the work environment),
- changes to systems of work (e.g. replacing scaffolding with MEWP's, battered excavations used instead of shoring etc.),
- changes to plant & equipment - not like for like (e.g. replacement of telehandler with a crane, scissor lift changed to scaffolding etc.), and
- change of training requirements.

Note: Where significant changes are identified, work should be stopped until the RAMS has been updated and signed off.

RAMS Template – 8 Sections

The RAMS template consists of 8 sections, and these should be completed as necessary. When completing the RAMS, it is important to note that the hazards, associated risks, local conditions, system of work, resources, equipment and competencies required may change and this must be reflected/ updated in the RAMS. The 8 sections are:

Section 1	**Contractor Details**
Section 2	**Site and Work Activity Information**
Section 3	**Method of Work**
Section 4	**Training Requirements**
Section 5	**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
Section 6	**Emergency Procedures and Welfare Requirements**
Section 7	**Risk Assessment Method Statement Sign Off**
Section 8	**Appendices / Additional Information**

The RAMS template has been designed in PDF format which can be completed and downloaded by the user and easily distributed to the relevant stakeholders upon completion. Alternatively, the form can be printed and filled out manually.

Filling out the Risk Assessment Method Statement Template

Section 1 – Contractor Details

This section contains basic information about the contractor and the person(s) responsible for developing the RAMS and overseeing the work. It is important to ensure that the RAMS revision number is updated each time to reflect any changes to the document.

Section 2 – Site and Work Activity Information

Provide basic information about the site and planned work activity. Give an overview of work activity to include:

- Project title – name of site / project name.
- Site address.
- Brief description of planned work activity.
- The specific work location should be as accurate as possible so that works can be coordinated with the Project Supervisor Construction Stage (PSCS).
- Estimated number of workers involved.
- Estimated duration of work including start and finish dates. Durations may change, and the RAMS should be updated to reflect these changes.
- Details of the PSCS where appointed.*

Section 3 – Method of Work

The method of work will help to identify, tools, plant, chemicals, hazardous substances and equipment. To enable an effective and practical RAMS, the responsible person(s) should populate the following 7 sections, as required.

3.1 Develop a safe system of work

This is the most important section in the RAMS. Describe how the work will be done by listing the key steps as to how the work activity will be carried out including securing the work area (e.g. setting up the work area, delivery of plant / material / storage, work activity, clean-up on completion). The system of work must be monitored on a continuous basis taking into account local conditions. Development of the safe system of work will help to plan, identify hazards, controls and resources needed to complete the work safely.

3.2 List the hazards and attach site specific risk assessments

Existing risk assessments may be available in the Safety Statement and these should be reviewed and amended to suit local conditions and included in the appendix section 8 of the RAMS. Identify the risk assessments required from the sequence of work developed and attach to the final document. It may be necessary to compile new risk assessments as required.

- Go to BeSMART.ie where you can create a free site specific safety statement and risk assessments for your business's, or
- Download a CIF risk assessment template **here.**

BeSMART.ie

3.3 List plant, key tools and essential equipment required

Before work starts the responsible person(s) must:

- identify and list plant, tools and equipment required to complete the work.

When work starts, the responsible person must ensure that:

- inspections of plant and equipment (where required) are carried out, records are kept and that they are available locally for review, and
- Statutory Certificates and Thorough / Weekly Examinations must be available locally for review and inspection. Decide where and how the information will kept i.e.
  - with the PSCS,
  - in your equipment register,
  - listed in the RAMS, or
  - contained in Section 8 appendices.

If new plant or equipment is introduced after the work starts it is checked for suitability, and the report(s) of thorough examination (if applicable) / serial number(s) are updated in the RAMS.

If the plant or equipment introduced is not identical to what was specified in the RAMS, then the RAMS must be revised and updated.

Note: Statutory certificates and examination certificates must be cross checked, before the work starts, by the responsible person and the register must be reviewed / updated on a regular basis.

Further Information

Link to Required forms e.g. GA1, GA2 etc.

3.4 Examination and Inspection of Equipment

Some works and equipment may require detailed inspection. Examination / inspection certificates must be available locally i.e. with the PSCS / in your inspection register or contained in section 8 appendices.

Inspections should be done by a competent person(s) and records kept which could include the following:

- Excavations (AF3),
- Scaffolding (GA3),
- Work at Height Equipment (GA3) - e.g. ladders, MEWP, handrails, netting, harness etc., and
- Personal Flotation Devices (AF4).

Further Information

Link to Required forms e.g. GA3, AF3, AF4 etc.

3.5 Permit to Work (PTW)

Isolation of equipment, authorisation to work or access to dangerous environments / locations may require a permit to work (PTW). A PTW is a time / location specific document which will outline specific permissions and requirements that must be followed for certain elements of work. If it is a requirement, it should be identified in the RAMS.

^Note: The system of work as developed in the RAMS may need to be amended to include specific PTW requirements (e.g. specific training, equipment, lock out / tag out) before being signed off.

3.6 Chemicals

When developing the RAMS, identify what chemicals are required and what could cause harm. Efforts must be made to eliminate, substitute or replace harmful chemicals with a less hazardous equivalent, where possible. A register of chemicals along with the applicable storage arrangements should be maintained along with the corresponding safety data sheets (SDS). Examples of chemicals could include:

- solvent based paints,
- lubricants or fuels,
- isocyanates (paints, coatings, foams), and
- epoxy resins / glues / sealants etc.

3.7 Hazardous Substances

Hazardous substances may be present or could be a by-product of the planned work and could include:

- asbestos (e.g. pre-2000 insulation, guttering, roof or floor tiles),
- biological agents (e.g. waste, sewage, human bodily fluids),
- respirable crystalline silica (RCS) - from cutting, grinding and drilling stone / concrete,
- wood dust,
- mineral fibres (e.g. rockwool insulation),
- fumes from welding,
- heavy metals (e.g. lead, cadmium, mercury), and
- carbon monoxide (e.g., exhaust fumes from diesel-generators).

Where hazardous substances have been identified, there is a need to put in place appropriate control measures to manage the hazard (e.g. appoint a registered asbestos removal specialist, utilise dust suppression attachments such as vacuum when drilling, water suppression when cutting concrete or when sweeping internal floors).

Use of appropriate PPE should be identified and provided and listed in Section 5 – PPE. Typical PPE could include for e.g. FFP2 or FFP3 masks, gloves or safety glasses should be identified and training on the equipment should be carried out, if required.

Section 4 – Identify and Select Your Training Requirements

Identify the various training requirements that personnel will be required to complete the activity safely such as:

4.1 SOLAS Safe Pass and CSCS Mandatory Training

Solas Safe Pass

Certain categories of construction workers (e.g. craft / general / on-site security) must have a valid card Solas Safe Pass Card

Mandatory training requirements

Categories of Construction Skills Certification Skills (CSCS), which are required for the following work activities:

- Scaffolding (Basic and Advanced)
- Mobile tower scaffold
- Tower crane operation
- Self-erecting tower crane
- Crawler crane
- Mini-digger

- Slinging / Signalling
- Telescopic handler operation
- Tractor / dozer operation
- Mobile crane operation
- Articulated dumper operation
- Site dumper operation
- 180 excavator operation
- 360 excavator operation
- Roof wall cladding / sheeting
- Built up roof felting
- Signing, lighting and guarding on roads
- Locating underground services
- Shotfiring
- Assisting in implementation of roadworks

4.2 Other Training

Other training that may be required such as manual handling, MEWP, working at height, confined spaces, fire training, first aid responder etc.

Note: While developing the RAMS, the responsible person(s) should identify what training requirements will be needed. While the exact personnel may not be known at the time of writing, individual information when known must be added to the RAMS or be available locally and checked before starting work.

Section 5 – Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Selection and the use of PPE must be provided to workers where the risks of the work activity cannot be avoided either by other means or through the use of collective protection. PPE must be suitable and adequate for the worker(s). Where required, adequate training must be provided to ensure correct use of the PPE and records of issue and training should be maintained. Identify the equipment required and add other information if required.

- ➔ Foot protection e.g. steel toe caps / steel mid sole / ankle support
- ➔ Hand Protection
- ➔ Hearing protection e.g. ear defenders / ear plugs
- ➔ High visibility clothing
- ➔ Head protection
- ➔ Eye protection
- ➔ Face protection
- ➔ Protective clothing
- ➔ Respiratory protective equipment e.g. FFP2 / FFP3 face masks / half mask respirator etc.
- ➔ Fall protection equipment e.g. harness / fall arrest / fall restraint

Section 6 – Emergency Procedures and Welfare Requirements

6.1 Rescue Plan

Additional plans for rescue may be required depending on the work to be carried out (e.g. confined spaces, scaffolding, roof areas, etc.) to be developed. If a rescue plan is required tick if applicable and include in Section 8 Appendices.

Note: If a rescue plan is required, it should:

- ➔ be prepared by a competent person with the method of rescue proportionate to the risk,
- ➔ identify specialist equipment and training that may be required and any requirements for workers with underlying medical conditions, and
- ➔ emergency drills are practiced ensuring they are adequate and appropriate.

6.2 Emergency Procedures

Are required to be in place in the event of an undesired event occurring. If already in place and they have been communicated to workers tick the box to confirm.

If there are no emergency procedures in place you should identify the:

- closest hospitals / doctor surgeries in the area,
- first aid responder(s) / location of First Aid Box,
- assembly points,
- eircode, as it will help emergency services identify the location,
- utility providers' emergency contact numbers, and
- other emergency response equipment required (e.g. AED, lifelines, spill kits).

6.3 Welfare Requirements

Adequate welfare facilities must be provided for personnel on site and if required these should be identified in the RAMS (e.g. toilets, canteen, drying rooms).

Further information

Requirements for welfare facilities in construction

Section 7 – Risk Assessment Method Statement Sign-Off

Good communications are critical to the successful operation of the RAMS. The involvement of all stakeholders and personnel at a local level will ensure that the RAMS:

- is specific to the work activity,
- takes into account current local conditions, and
- is reviewed and revised by stakeholders as required before starting work to consider personnel, equipment and the system of work that could have changed significantly from when the RAMS was first written.

The review and sign-off of the RAMS has been broken into the following 3 stages:

7.1 Person(s) Responsible for Managing and Supervising Work

Employers must ensure that work is managed and is conducted in a safe manner and that adequate supervision is available. Employers must assign a responsible person(s) who will take ownership of the work activity and who will ensure that:

- it is safe to commence the work based on local conditions and that it is carried out in accordance with the measures outlined in the RAMS,
- the work activity is adequately planned, managed and supervised,
- consultation is carried out with persons undertaking the work,
- the PSCS is kept informed of any issues or changes so as to ensure coordination of the work activity,
- the RAMS is signed off by all stakeholders and that workers are briefed before starting work or after any significant changes to the system of work (e.g. the work activity changes significantly, or new hazards are introduced), and
- The responsible person must verify the information contained in the RAMS sections match the resources being used on site, for example:
    - training records of all individuals involved (e.g. CSCS, Safe Pass etc.) are included,
    - certification for plant and machinery, and
    - examination and inspection of equipment is complete.

7.2 Project Supervisor Construction Stage (PSCS)

Where a PSCS has been appointed, they are responsible for coordination and implementation of contractors and procedures on site. The PSCS must satisfy themselves that it is safe to allow the work to commence based on the information provided and that it reflects local on-site conditions.

7.3 Risk Assessment Method Statement Workers Briefing

Employers must provide information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure the safety, health, and welfare at work of their site personnel. When carrying out the RAMS briefing the responsible person must ensure that:

- worker engagement in the process is encouraged throughout the lifecycle of the RAMS (e.g. throughout development, briefing and during the work process)
- worker' SOLAS Safe Pass, CSCS card and other training details are validated. If not included in the RAMS, this information must be available locally
- the information provided is given in a form, manner and (as appropriate) language that is reasonably likely to be understood by the workers concerned, and
- all persons involved in the work activity must sign off on the content of the RAMS, and relevant feedback received is recorded in the comments / feedback section, and reviewed, and the RAMS is updated as necessary.

Section 8 - Appendices / Additional Information Required

If additional information is required and cannot be fitted in the template, it can be added to this section or it should be available locally for reference (e.g. certification, safety data sheets and training data which must be cross checked and verified and be available for viewing for example in the site office). Typical information could consist of:

- local risk assessment(s),
- drawings / sketches,
- training records,
- statutory certificates,
- permits to work,
- safety data sheets,
- rescue plan, and
- other information (e.g. extracts from the Construction Stage Safety and Health Plan provided by the PSCS).

Summary

Preparing a RAMS should not be a box-ticking exercise. The only way for it to become useful and effective at minimising risk is to ensure that:

- ➔ local conditions, hazards and associated risks are identified, and a appropriate control measures are put in place,
- ➔ the RAMS is reviewed and amended as it is a live working document,
- ➔ if there are any significant changes to the systems of work, plant and equipment or training requirements etc. that they are reflected in the document,
- ➔ workers are briefed and consulted, and
- ➔ all stakeholders sign off on the RAMS before starting work.

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